



Testimony before the Public Health Committee

Commissioner Roderick L. Bremby

March 7, 2012

Good morning, Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Roderick Bremby and I am Commissioner of the Department of Social Services (DSS).

H.B. No. 5243 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF MERCURY IN DENTISTRY.

The bill would prohibit the use of mercury in dental amalgam fillings. This will have a significant fiscal impact on the Medicaid dental program. Dental amalgams are the mainstay for dental restorations because the material is very easy to work with under adverse conditions; inexpensive when compared to other dental restoration materials with the same durability (gold and porcelain); much more durable than composite resins; and does not have toxic or injurious effects on one's health. All of this information is well documented in scientific literature.

Because composite resin restorations are more costly than dental amalgam restorations and require replacement more frequently, we anticipate a significant unbudgeted cost to the Medicaid program if mercury amalgam in dental fillings were to be prohibited. This, in view of the fact that there is no documented adverse health impact to mercury amalgam in dental fillings, causes us to be opposed to this proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer questions you have.